



Technology to create a seamless environment

by Francis L. Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y., — Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) collaborative computer technology, intended to assist users to work together in a “seamless environment” from geographically separated locations, has been made available as a commercial product.

The K2™ collaborative environment has been released by Ball Systems Engineering Operations (BSEO), a unit of Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. It was developed for the AFRL Information Directorate’s Information Systems Division at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, under the Air Force’s Dual Use Science & Technology (DUST) program.

“K2™ leverages information and simulation technology to enhance decision support by linking information and software tools together to get critical information to decision-makers – when and where they need it,” said William K. McQuay, program manager for the directorate.

“In 21st-century information-centric enterprises – both military and civilian – geographically separated engineers, scientists, managers and other specialists will jointly develop new products and solve problems,” said McQuay. These teams will be able to access computer-based engineering tools, models and simulations, knowledge bases, and dispersed special facilities.”

With both defense and commercial sectors moving toward virtual and collaborative solutions to bring the right systems to the market or the battlefield at the right time and at the right price, K2™ provides leading-edge technology to implement a vision for distributive collaborative enterprises.

The purpose of the DUST program is to offer financial incentives for Department of Defense contractors to transition technology developed in federal laboratories into the commercial marketplace. BSEO led the development of the K2™ collaborative framework as part of a \$4 million cooperative agreement.

The DUST Collaborative Engineering and Virtual Prototyping effort is part of the AFRL Collaborative Enterprise Environment (CEE) program that applies information and simulation technology to a broad spectrum of decision support activities. These include distributed planning; cross-domain technology development and sharing; system design, performance and cost analyses; test and evaluation; and distributed mission planning.

“The CEE research implemented in K2™ will facilitate collaborative virtual operations and affect a major cultural change in how business is conducted in the defense and commercial sectors,” said McQuay. @